

A Letter from the Commander



As we make our way through every year filled with performances, tours and local events, it is difficult to find the time to show how much I appreciate the incredible talent and energies of every member of this outstanding organization. One of my favorite squadron programs is the Noncommissioned Officer and Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter awards. This gives my senior staff and me the opportunity to recognize outstanding individuals and achievements within our

squadron. Every three months highly deserving members of The USAF Band are nominated by their supervisors for this singular honor. The nominees and a written record of their achievements go before a board and are scored on such important areas such as leadership, duty accomplishments and professional development. This quarter it gives me great pleasure to announce that the winners were TSgt Brian McCurdy, clarinetist and MSgt James Bittner, trumpeter of The Concert Band. Both of these terrific people represent the best of The USAF Band and the 11th Wing. Congratulations to both of them on yet another fine performance.

There are many others who work behind the scenes ensuring the success of each and every performance of your USAF Band. CMSgt Shepela and her terrific Operations team are the glue that binds together all of the many elements of every performance. CMSgts Steinhauser and Jackson and their "tip of the spear" Public Affairs and Marketing staff are the people that get the word out, so you can join us whenever we

perform. I also owe a personal debt of thanks to Band Manager CMSgt Joseph Taylor and his outstanding Commander Support Staff. His constant efforts to maintain the best of the best for all of our personnel is the one critical element that makes music making possible for every one of us here in Hangar 2. These are the unsung heroes of *America's Band*. They add the "spit and the polish" to everything we do. Simply put, they make it happen!

As the Concert Band and Singing Sergeants traveled through the Midwest on our recently completed 1999 Spring Tour, I had the opportunity to meet and talk with so many of our loyal friends and fans in this wonderful cross section of our nation. The audience response to our performances was nothing short of incredible, and I was constantly humbled by the depth and magnitude of your commitment and friendship to this outstanding ensemble and to our nation's Air Force. At every opportunity we were surrounded by friends and neighbors who wanted to personally express their thanks for what we represented to them as members of your United States Air Force. There is no greater reward for any performing artist than the respect and admiration of his or her audience. On behalf of every member of this organization, and with sincere appreciation, I pledge my deepest commitment to continue to earn your trust and respect with every future performance of your USAF Band.

Lowell E. Graham, Colonel, USAF
Commander and Conductor

SINGING SERGEANTS SUMMARY

Spring has sprung for The Singing Sergeants. We begin May with a performance at the annual Charity Ball at Bolling Air Force Base at the beginning of May. On May 13, a small group from The Singing Sergeants will journey to nearby Woodbridge, Va. for an Education Outreach clinic at Christa McAuliffe Elementary School. It is always rewarding to reach out to the community in this manner. We'll hit the road to perform at the Middle Georgia Military Ball on May 22 at Robins Air Force Base. Finally, we are honored to be saluting the men and women who served their country with valor at a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery Amphitheater on Memorial Day, May 31.

We have much to be proud of as we review the past few months. The Guest Artist Series at DAR Constitution Hall was a hit. Three members of The Singing Sergeants, SMSgt Patricia Wolfe, TSgt Janice Carl and TSgt Amy Statz provided back-up vocals to legendary Broadway artist, Melba Moore. On March 28, the entire ensemble sang with that beloved favorite, Nell Carter. Spring Tour 1999 was an unqualified success, as we wowed audiences

throughout the states of West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. One of our newest medleys, "Three of the Best," was received especially well. This medley, arranged by TSgt Robert Thurston, highlights three legendary rock stars, one of whom is Billy Joel, who was recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. MSgt Russell Colleran's rendition of "Piano Man," complete with harmonica, brought the house down every time he performed it.

Finally, The Concert Band and Singing Sergeants will be performing during the months of June, July and August for the Summer Concert Series. Check the Concert Line for exact locations and times.

A warm welcome is offered to our newest addition, soprano TSgt Anne Seaton, who comes to us from the USAF Band of Flight at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio. We sadly bid a fond farewell to TSgt Kimberly Haering upon her separation from the Air Force. We wish her and her husband, Rich, much happiness as they embark upon their new life in Austin, Texas. —TSgt Janice Carl